This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

11-26-17 1138

TO THE MEMORY OF
LIEUT. COL. JOHN SHAW BILLINGS
M.D., D.C.L., LL.D.
FIRST DIRECTOR OF
THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
WHO BY HIS FORESIGHT ENERGY AND
ADMINISTRATIVE ABILITY
MADE EFFECTIVE
ITS FAR-REACHING INFLUENCE

"HE IS NOT DEAD WHO GIVETH LIFE TO KNOWLEDGE"

JOHN SHAW BILLINGS MEMORIAL FUND
FOUNDED BY ANNA PALMER DRAPER

THE WORLD-MYSTERY.

THE
WORLD-MYSTERY

FOUR ESSAYS

BY

G. R. S. MEAD, B.A., M.R.A.S.

LONDON:
THEOSOPHICAL PUBLISHING SOCIETY,
7, DUKE STREET, ADELPHI, W.C.
MADRAS: "THEOSOPHIST" OFFICE, ADYAR.
BENARES: THE THEOSOPHICAL PUBLISHING SOCIETY.
1895

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
431533B
ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
THE WORLD-SOUL - - -	1
THE VESTURES OF THE SOUL - -	81
THE WEB OF DESTINY - - -	113
TRUE SELF-RELIANCE - - -	143

Ashcharyyavat pashyati kashchidenam
Âshcharyyavad vadati tathaiva chânyah
Âshcharyyavach chainamanyah shrinoti
Shrutvâpyenam veda na chaiva kashchit.

One sees this as a wonder,
As a wonder, too, one speaks of it,
As a wonder one hears of it,
And having heard, knows it not anyone.

BHAGAVAD GÎTÂ, II. 29.

Ὡς οὖν ἐγένετο . . πρὸς τὴν γῆν εἰπεῖν, ὥσπερ ἤκουσεν, ὅτι Πὰν ὁ μέγας τέθνηκεν· οὐ φθῆναι δὲ παυσάμενον αὐτὸν, καὶ γενέσθαι μέγαν οὐχ ἑνὸς ἀλλὰ πολλῶν στεναγμὸν ἅμα θαυμασμῷ μεμιγμένον.

And so he called out to the land, as he had heard, "Pan, the Great, is dead." And hardly had he ceased, when there arose a mighty cry, not of one, but of many, mingled with wonderment.

PLUTARCH, ON THE CESSATION OF ORACLES, XVII.

Ἰδού, μυστήριον ὑμῖν λέγω.

Behold, I tell you a mystery.

I. CORINTHIANS, XV. 51.

THE WORLD-SOUL.

THE task that I propose to myself is no light one; it is no less than to discuss some of the opinions of my fellow-men on Deity, and to point out, if possible, some common ground of agreement or reconciliation between the innumerable ideas put forward on this inexhaustible topic. I shall not write either as an avowed monotheist, pantheist, theist, or atheist, for I conceive that a real student of theosophy is sufficiently imbued with the spirit of the great law of expansion and progress, not to condemn himself or herself to the narrowing limits of any of these sectarian ideas, which cannot fail to bring him in conflict with the prejudices of some section or other of his brother-men.

I hope to find this common ground of agreement, for at any rate the theist, pantheist, or monotheist, in the concept of the World-Soul, *in one or other of its aspects;* although I despair of finding much sympathy from the so-called

atheist, whose intellectual negation is frequently, if not invariably, stultified by his actions. For do we not find the avowed atheist searching for the reason of that which he denies to have any intelligent operation; do we not find him frequently striving for an ideal which can never be attained, if, as he supposes, the present is the outcome of the past interaction of blindly driving force and matter? Why, again, should he work for the improvement of the race if that race, as he himself, is to depart into the void together with the producer of his and its consciousness? For the body dies and the earth will also die. And if consciousness is a product of organized matter, then the disruption of that organism means inevitably the dissipation of consciousness. Why, then, this effort to benefit that which must, on his own hypothesis, tend inevitably to annihilation?

From the materialists, then, this essay, perchance, will gain little intellectual sympathy, although I may venture to hope that the ideals of their fellow-men, which will be brought forward, will meet, if not with reverential consideration, at least with respect. Nor will it be any part of my task to criticize, except in

the briefest manner, any of the crude expressions of man's aspiration to the Divine, but rather to put forward a number of instances of the more perfect expressions of great minds and great teachers who have in some measure sensed the actuality of that mysterious bond that makes all men one.

First, then, let me say that the term World-Soul is not intended in this essay to carry the technical meaning of the platonic or neoplatonic All-Soul or Soul of the Universals (ψυχὴ τοῦ παντός or τῶν ὅλων); and so in order to express in some way what the term World-Soul is intended to mean, it will be necessary to give a meaning to the words "soul" and "world." By "soul" is intended the underlying "something" under every manifested form, that something which is the life, consciousness or intelligence, or whatever term is preferred, which makes it that form and no other. Nor should we exclude anything, not even that which in these latter days is called "inanimate," from our sympathy, for to our greater Selves naught that exists, nay, not even the grain of sand, is in-*animate*, for then it would be *soul*-less, and the Divine would have been excluded from part of itself.

And now let us start with ourselves in our enquiry, where we find a soul encased in a body, a body made of many "lives," of infinite infinitesimal cells, each the "form" of a soul. And yet the soul of man is not *composed* of these "lives"; the consciousness of man is not simply the product or sum of their consciousness, nor is his intelligence a compound of their intelligence. The soul of man is one, a self-centred unit, indestructible, imperishable, self-motive; it dies not nor comes into being.

Next, let us, taking this as a starting-point, use analogy to aid us, as we pass within, into the region of ideas. For analogy is the only method we can employ, if we wish to widen our understanding, and without it we might well doubt the possibility of knowledge. Every thing, or rather every soul, is the mirror of every other soul, just as in the Monadology of Leibnitz; and if it were not that a knowledge of one soul comprises the knowledge of all other souls, and that kosmos is contained potentially in every atom, then were our striving towards wisdom vain and our aspiration to reality likewise vain. Taking,

then, the example of the human soul, enshrined in a universe of "lives," whether we regard it as it were a sun in the midst of its system, or as an ocean of light in which the "lives" are bathed, let us try to conceive that there is another and more mighty Life, a Divine Soul, of which the human souls are "lives," and which we may term the Soul of Humanity. And yet this Soul is not made up of the souls of men, but is a unit of itself, self-motive, and itself and naught else. Further—for the human mind is so constituted that nothing short of infinitude can suffice it—that this Divine Soul is in its turn a Life, one of an infinite number of "Lives" of a like degree, that enshrine a SOUL transcending them as much as man transcends the "lives" of the universe of his body. And further still, that that which transcends the Divine is, in its turn, . . . But why go further? Is not the series infinite? Where can we set the term, or place a boundary, or limit infinitude? "So far shalt thou go!" and then the mind loses itself in the stupendous height of its soaring and must return to earth to rest its wings.

Thus towards infinity we rise in our ideation,

conceiving every atom as the shrine of a soul; every stone, animal, man; every globe, and system, and universe; every system of universes, and universe of systems—as the shrine of a Soul. For our universe is neither the first nor the last of its kind; their number is infinite. And when the consummation of our present universe is perfected there will be "another Word on the tongue of the Ineffable," for the Ineffable speaks infinitely, or, as our Brâhman brethren say, there are "crores of crores of Brahmâs," or universes.

Thus an infinity in one direction of thought, and equally so an infinity in the other direction. For are not the "lives" of the body, too, the souls of a universe of other invisible "lives"; and these, each in its turn, the suns of still more invisible universes, until the infinitely small blends with the infinitely great and all is One.

Perhaps you may have thought that in this concept we have nothing but an infinite series of eternally separated entities; of infinite division; of a chaos of multiplicity; of a stupendous separateness? This might be so if it stood alone; but as in all things here below, we can have no manifestation without the help of

contraries, we must take its twin concept to complete it.

In pluribus Unum et Unum in pluribus; One in many and in many One. "The *essential* unity of all souls with the Over-Soul" is a fundamental postulate of the Wisdom of all ages. That is to say all souls are one in essence, whatever forms they may ensoul. But what is more; what is almost an overpowering thought, necessary though it be to universal progress; not only the human soul, but even the soul of the very grain of dust has the potentiality of expanding its consciousness into the All-consciousness. Every soul is endowed with the power of giving and receiving with respect to every other soul; of passing through every stage of consciousness; of *expanding;* just as the One, the All-Soul, so to say, *contracted* itself into manifestation, into the Many, subordinating itself to itself, that every soul might know and become every other soul, by virtue of that Love which is the cause of existence.

Thus, then, every soul aspires to union with its own essence; and this constitutes the religious spirit of mankind; and also our love

of wisdom and our search for certainty. This constitutes that Path to the Knowledge of Divine Things, which we to-day call Theosophy; that synthesis of true religion, philosophy and science; of right aspiration, right thought and right observation, which the world is ever blindly seeking.

The World-Soul, then, for us, is the One Soul of Humanity, which will differ for each soul in proportion to the state of consciousness it has arrived at. No two souls are alike, just as no two blades of grass or grains of sand are alike, for then, as has been well said, there would be no reason why one should be in a particular place or state and not the other, and so the Reason of the universe be stultified.

The term "world," in our present enquiry, therefore, will be limited to the cycle of manifestation of our particular humanity, for this is our present world; the collective embodiment of that Divine Soul, which may consequently be referred to as the World-Soul.

This source of his being, this essence of his nature, this something that transcends himself in his highest self-consciousness, man calls by many names, of which the one which ob-

tains most generally in the Western world, and in the English tongue, is "God."

And here, much as I shrink from hurting the feelings of any devout believer, I would protest against the tendency of nearly all unreflecting religionists to limit the illimitable, to crystallize the fountain of their being, and to materialize That, which it is blasphemy to name, much less to attempt to dress in the tawdry rags of our own mental equipment. There are those who will talk to you of "God" as they would of a personal acquaintance, who profess a familiarity that would outrage our feelings of decency if the object of their remarks were even a wise and holy man whom we had learned to reverence. There are others who have such limited notions of the Divine that they cling with desperation to terms that have their origin in the vulgarest misunderstanding, and who dub those who will not use their Shibboleths as "atheists," simply because they cannot understand that there is a reverence of the mind that transcends terms of the emotions; that there is an aspiration that transcends all endeavour to give the names of human qualities to That which is beyond all

qualities, and to which their pious jargon is blasphemy. If such reverence is "atheism," then we had better change our terms and cease to use words that no longer possess meaning.

Let all men agree that no definition is possible, and that any enunciation of the mystery is but a temporary stepping stone to higher and still higher things, and there will no longer be seen the sad spectacle of human beings trying to pour the ocean into a waterpot.

For after all what do men fear in the desperation with which they cling to such limiting terms? To me they appear to fear that, where all is so vague and abstract, the goal they propose to themselves would, without definition, seem too far off for them to ever hope to reach it. But surely they have the infinitude within their own nature? Is there not a "Christ" potential in every man which is his true Self; and beyond, the "Fatherhood"; and beyond, the "Father of all Fatherhoods"; and beyond—Infinitude? But all within the nature and in the essence of every man; nothing is without, nothing which is not of the same essence; all is That . . . ! Is it so strange to "go home"?

Is it an abstract void, a negation, to know

the Self's true Being? Or, on the other hand, is this a mere exaggeration of the personal man? Is this dictated by self-pride and self-conceit? If such reverent aspiration is thus condemned by any, they will first have to show that the great world-teachers have lied, for the word of no lesser men can come before their teaching. One and all, the great teachers have inculcated this wisdom; and it requires but little study to find how admirably it explains all the apparent contradictions in the exoteric expressions of the world-scriptures.

"Be humble if thou wouldst attain to wisdom." Yes, but do not debase yourself; humility is not slavishness; reverence is not fawning. How can Deity take pleasure in that which a noble-minded man could never view without the greatest pity? "I am but as a worm in thy sight," David is made to say, and there are those who rejoice to echo the words, and declare that without the "Grace of God," they must continue worms.

But how can even the body, much less the *man*, the mind, or thinker, be so debased? Each is most honourable in its own dominion, and only dishonourable in proportion as it fails

to "do its mystery" in sacrifice to the Self, whose "Grace" is its very life and being and the well-spring of its action. It is the duty of man to "worship" the Deity and not to grovel. To present that which is "worthy" to the Self, and not to delight in debasement

"And so . . . with fear and trembling work out your own salvation: for the worker in you, both as to willing and working for well-pleasing, is Deity."

(ὥστε. . . μετὰ φόβου καὶ τρόμου τὴν ἑαυτῶν σωτηρίαν κατεργάζεσθε. Θεός γάρ ἐστιν ὁ ἐνεργῶν ἐν ὑμῖν καὶ τὸ θέλειν καὶ τὸ ἐνεργεῖν ὑπὲρ τῆς εὐδοκίας.—*Philippians* ii. 12, 13.)

And if that worker is the Divine Self, what reason is there that it should humble itself, or debase itself, for the very power that makes man work out his own salvation is that Deity itself?

We shall now be able to understand the words of Krishna, in the *Bhagavad Gîtâ* (vii. 21, 22):

"Whichever form [of deity] a worshipper longs with faith to worship, in that form I make his faith steady. Endowed with that faith he seeks to propitiate [it] in that [form],

and obtains therefrom his profitable desires which are in truth bestowed by me."

(Yo yo yâm yâm tanumbhaktah shraddhayârchchitum
ichchhati,
Tasyâ tasyâchalâm shraddhâm tâmeva viddhâmy-
aham,
Sa tayâ shraddhyâ yuktustasyârâdhanamîhate,
Labhate cha tatah kâmân mayaiva vihitân hitân.)

And again (ix. 23):

"Even those devotees of other deities who worship with faith, they too, O Son of Kuntî, worship me indeed, though not as it is laid down."

(Yo'py anyadevatâ bhaktâ yajante shraddhyânvitâh,
Te'pi mâmeva Kaunteya yajantyavidhipûrvakam.)

For Krishna is the World-Soul, the Self of all men (x. 20):

"O Lord of doubt, I am the Self seated in the heart of all beings. I am the beginning and middle and end of all creatures."

(Aham âtmâ, Gudâkesha, sarvabhûtâshyasthitah,
Aham âdishcha madhyancha bhutânâmanta eva cha.)

And now that no one may think that all this is a bald assertion and an unsupported state-

ment, let us collect the evidences of wisdom from all climes and races and times, evidences as grand and unimpeachable as any that the modern scientist possesses for his five-sense facts.

The wealth of material is so great that it is difficult to cull a passage here and there and leave so much unnoticed. Neither is it easy to know in what order to take the world-religions; which to take first or which last.

As, however, we must start somewhere, let us begin with the oldest scriptures of our Âryan race, the Vedas, and then the oldest of the Purânas. Next let us take a glance at Taoism, the most mystical of the creeds of the far East; then pass to the Avesta, that ancient scripture of the Pârsîs; and so on to Egypt; first quoting from the Zohar and other kabalistic writings which contain the wisdom of the Chaldæans and a key to the misunderstood scriptures of the Jews. Egypt will lead us to speak of the wisdom of Hermes and the Gnôsis of those who are now known generally as Gnostics; and this will lead to a quotation from Paul and some reference to the Greek and Roman philosophy, and the ancient systems of Orpheus and other

great teachers. Finally we shall find identical ideas among the Scandinavian peoples, and a striking confirmation in Mohammedan Suffism. All, all without exception, sensed the World-Soul, hymned of it, sought union therewith; for of what else could they speak? Only they glorified that which it was in its essence, and did not worship its grossest and most impermanent manifestation, the surface of five-sense nature. Such an idolatry was reserved to the latter end of the nineteenth century, when human intellect worships the ground its body treads on, the gross body of the World-Soul, and has forgotten whence it came and whither it will return. Our times are an age of the deification of matter and the consequent fall of ideals!

Thus, then, let us first turn to that mysterious link with the past, the *Rig Veda*. Who knows whence it came? Who can tell its origin? Perchance those who have kept the record since the great Deluge of Atlantis could name its transmitters, and tell of those who withdrew to the "Sacred Island."

Among prayers to the Supreme Principle, the World-Soul, first must come the famous Gâyatrî,

"the holiest verse in the Vedas." It runs as follows, in what Wilson calls, "Sir William Jones's translation of a paraphrastic interpretation."

"Let us adore the supremacy of that Divine Sun, the Godhead, Who illuminates all, Who recreates all, from Whom all proceed, to Whom all must return, Whom we invoke to direct our understandings aright in our progress toward His holy seat." (Sir W. Jones' *Works*, xiii. 367.)

This mantra is found in the 10th Hymn of the 4th Ashtaka (Eighth) of the Samhitâ (Collection) of the *Rig Veda*, not as in the above expanded paraphrase, but in an abbreviated form, for "such is the fear entertained of profaning this text, that copyists of the Vedas not unfrequently refrain from transcribing it," says Wilson. (*Vishnu Purâna*, ii. 251.) "It is the duty of every Brâhman to repeat it *mentally* in his morning and evening devotions," and it is to be suspected that the western world has not yet received the correct text, though Sir William Jones may have got a version nearer the truth than his successors. It is well known that the Brâhmans are the proudest and most

exclusive people in the world where the secrets of their religion are concerned, and it is reasonable to suppose that a mantra that pertains to their initiation would not be lightly revealed.

The subtle metaphysical and mystical interpretations of this most sacred formula, especially those of the Vedânta School, testify to its sanctity. The number of interpretations also that the words of the mantra lend themselves to are almost innumerable. The phrasing, for instance, can be taken as neuter or masculine and so on.

Perhaps the spirit of the central thought of the oriental religious world may be further explained by another Hymn, translated by Sir William Jones. It reiterates that most stupendous intuition of the human mind, that feeling of identity with the World-Soul, in a magnificent litany which runs as follows:

"May that Soul of mine, which mounts aloft in my waking hours, as an ethereal spark, and which, even in my slumber, has a like ascent, soaring to a great distance, as an emanation from the light of lights, be united by devout meditation with the Spirit supremely blest, and supremely intelligent!

"May that Soul of mine, by an agent similar to which the low-born perform their menial works, and the wise, deeply versed in sciences, duly solemnize their sacrificial rite; that Soul, which was itself the primal oblation placed within all creatures, be united by devout meditation with the Spirit supremely blest, and supremely intelligent!

"May that Soul of mine, which is a ray of perfect wisdom, pure intellect and permanent existence, which is the unextinguishable light fixed within created bodies, without which no good act is performed, be united by devout meditation with the Spirit supremely blest, and supremely intelligent!

"May that Soul of mine, in which, as an immortal essence, may be comprised whatever has past, is present, or will be hereafter; by which the sacrifice, where seven ministers officiate, is properly solemnized, be united by devout meditation with the Spirit supremely blest, and supremely intelligent!

"May that Soul of mine, into which are inserted, like the spokes of a wheel in the axle of a car, the holy texts of the Vedas; into which is interwoven all that belongs to created forms,

be united by devout meditation with the Spirit supremely blest, and supremely intelligent!

"May that Soul of mine, which, *distributed in other bodies*, guides mankind, as a skilful charioteer guides his rapid horses with reins; that Soul which is fixed in my breast, exempt from old age, and extremely swift in its course, be united, by divine meditation, with the Spirit supremely blest, and supremely intelligent!" (Sir W. Jones' *Works*, xiii. 372, 373.)

Such is an instance of the advanced theosophy of the Vedas, in the face of which it is difficult to understand the crude criticisms of the Weber-Müllerite School of materialistic scholarship, who would set it all down to the imaginings of a primitive pastoral people. The theosophical student is glad to turn to such a fair estimate as that of Barth, who says:

"Neither in the language nor in the thought of the *Rig Veda* have I been able to discover that quality of primitive natural simplicity which so many are fain to see in it. The poetry it contains appears to me, on the contrary, to be of a singularly refined character and artificially elaborated, full of allusions and reticences, of pretensions to mysticism and

theosophic insight; and the manner of its expression is such as reminds one more frequently of the phraseology in use among certain small groups of initiated than the poetic language of a large community." (*The Religions of India*, p. xiii.)

Truly so; and perhaps before long the methods of the Veda may be better understood, and it will be recognized how that the powers of nature and the moral attributes of man are fitter symbols of a divine theogony than personifications which include all the vices and pettiness of animal-man.

As H. W. Wallis says (*Cosmogony of the Rig Veda*, p. 8):

"The deities of the *Rig Veda* differ essentially from the Gods of Greek or Scandinavian mythology and of the *Mahâbhârata*, in the abstract and almost impersonal nature of their characters. They are little more than factors in the physical and moral order of the world, apart from which none, except perhaps Indra, has a self-interested existence."

To the Greek, Scandinavian and Mahâbhâratan deities, we may add the Pantheons of other nations as well, and also their Indras, Zeuses,

Jehovahs, and the rest, whose "self-interest" is explicable seeing that they were but the representations of the time-period or manifestations of a certain world, for there are crores of Brahmâs, Jupiters and Jehovahs in the ideal Kosmos. It is time that the western nations should remember their birth-place. We are not Semites but Âryans, a younger branch of the great Âryan Race, perchance, but still Âryans and not Semites. And being so we should remember the wisdom of our fathers and put aside the crude conceptions of the Semites as to Deity. Jehovah is in his place as the God of a small warlike nomad tribe, but entirely out of place in the Religion of those who profess to be followers of the Christ. It is high time to lay aside such gross anthropomorphism, which the learned Jews themselves rejected, as their Kabalah and Philo well testify. The curse of Christendom to-day is belief in this "jealous", and "self-interested" Jehovah as the One God, an idea alien to Âryan thought. Direful indeed has been the effect of the "curse" of the "chosen people" on their spoliators. They were robbed of their Scriptures, deprived of them by force, and the

ravished maiden of the Semites, forced against her will into the arms of the marauding Âryans, has used her "magic arts" against the tribe that holds her prisoner, for to-day she imprisons the *minds* of those who hold her *body* captive.

In other words, the western nations, being the youngest of the Âryan family, and lusty only in body, have in their ignorance worshipped the dead letter of that which they have not understood, and so debased their minds and characters with a bibliolatry scarce paralleled in the history of the world. Let us hope that this is passed and that the end of the nineteenth century may see the "prodigal son" return "home," and chastened by the experience of his exile, show his real heredity in an activity that his more sluggish elder brother in the East, who has never left home, can never manifest in such abundance, because of his very passivity. The Âryans have an ancestral religion, and every Âryan in the West should see to it that he does not pursue after other Gods.

Of course I speak of the crude exoteric God of the Hebrew populus, and not of the Mystery Deity, the Father, preached to the Jews by the

Initiate, whom the West calls Jesus of Nazareth. For did he not say that his hearers were "of their father the Devil," for they were "Abraham's seed" and "Abraham" was the ruler of this world? Nor do I mean any disrespect to the Jews of to-day, who are no more the Jews of the Bible, than we are Goths or Vandals, or woad-besmeared Britons. I do not write about, or for, "bodies," I am writing for "minds" and "souls" whose ancestry is divine, and not of the Lord of the Body, call him by what name you will.

How long will the perverse mind of man persist in telling us the fashion in which "God created" the world; how long will men blasphemously speak of That which is unutterable, and degrade the majesty of their Divine Souls into the poor imaginings of the animal minds which think in terms of their gross bodies, and of naught else? More reverently indeed did our ancestors phrase the mystery when they were yet uncontaminated by the mire of their earthly tabernacles, and a huckstering commercialism and a pseudo-science that gropes, on hands and knees, with eyes fixed on the surface of things, had not dragged the ideals of

humanity down to the dust. How different are the beginnings of cosmogony as sung of in the *Rig Veda!* The passage is familiar to western students in the noble verse of Colebrooke. The following, however, is another version:

"The non-existent was not, and the existent was not at that time; there was no air or sky beyond; what was covering in? and where? under shelter of what? was there water—a deep depth?

"Death was not nor immortality then, there was no discrimination of night and day: that one thing breathed without a wind of its own self; apart from it there was nothing else at all beyond.

"Darkness there was, hidden in darkness, in the beginning, everything here was an indiscriminate chaos; it was void covered with emptiness, all that was; that one thing was born by the power of warmth.

"So in the beginning arose desire, which was the first seed of mind; the wise found out by thought, searching in the heart, the parentage of the existent in the non-existent.

"Their line was stretched across; what was

above? what was below? there were generators, there were mighty powers; *svadha*, [nature perhaps] below, the presentation of offerings above.

"Who knoweth it forsooth? who can announce it here? whence it was born, whence this creation is? The gods came by the creating of it (*i.e.*, the one thing); who then knoweth whence it is come into being?

"Whence this creation [lit. emission] is come into being, whether it was ordained or no—He whose eye is over all in the highest heaven, He indeed knoweth it, or may be He knoweth it not." (Wallis, *Cosmogony of the Rig Veda*, pp. 59, 60. [*R. V.*, x. 129].)

Even such wooden translation cannot prevent the grandeur of the original occasionally peeping through, how much more noble then would be the translation of one who was whole-hearted in his version?

Notice the last lines. The World-Soul may know, or perchance even it knoweth not. For there are other World-Souls, and as among men most are ignorant of their own genesis so amid the World-Souls, some—the few perchance—may know, the many be ignorant; none knoweth absolutely but the One.

Passing next to a later Âryan Scripture, let us read how the great sect of the Vaishnavas hymn the deity, as written in the *Vishnu Purâna* (I. i.):

"OM! glory to Him who dwells in all beings (Vâsudeva). Victory be to Thee, Thou heart-pervading one (Pundarîkâksha); adoration be to Thee, Thou cause of the existence of all things (Vishvabhâvana); glory be to Thee, Lord of the senses (Hrishîkesha), the Supreme Spirit (Mahâpurusha), the ancient of birth (Pûrvaja)."

And later in the same work we read (v. 14-16, Wilson's Translation):

"Salutation to Thee, Who art uniform and manifold, all-pervading, Supreme Spirit, of inconceivable glory, and Who art simple existence! Salutation to Thee, O inscrutable, Who art Truth, and the essence of oblations! Salutation to Thee, O Lord, Whose nature is unknown, Who art beyond Primeval Matter, Who existest in five forms,[1] as one with the

[1] These are given by Wilson (i. 3) as: 1. Bhûtâtman, one with created things, or Pundarîkâksha; 2. Pradhânâtman, one with Crude Nature, or Vishvabhâvana; 3. Indriyâtman, one with the Senses, Hrishîkesha; 4. Paramâtman, Supreme Spirit, or Mahâpurusha; and 5. Âtman, Living Soul, animating Nature, and existing before it, or Pûrvaja.

Elements, with the Faculties, with Matter, with the Living Soul, with Supreme Spirit! Show favour, O Soul of the Universe, essence of all things, perishable or eternal, whether addressed by the designation of Brahmâ, Vishnu, Shiva, or the like. I adore Thee, O God [Parameshvara, Supreme Lord, rather], Whose nature is indescribable, Whose purposes are inscrutable, Whose name, even, is unknown; for the attributes of appellation or kind are not applicable to Thee, Who art THAT, the supreme Brahma [neuter] eternal, unchangeable, uncreated [Aja, unborn, rather.] But as the accomplishment of our objects cannot be attained except through some specific form, Thou art termed by us Krishna, Achyuta [the Imperishable], Ananta [the Endless,] or Vishnu. Thou, unborn (divinity), art all the object of these impersonations; Thou art the Gods, and all other beings; Thou art the whole World; Thou art all. Soul of the Universe, thou art exempt from change; and there is nothing except Thee in this whole existence. Thou art Brahmâ [male], Pashupati [Shiva, 'Lord of (sacred) animals'], Aryaman, Dhâtri, and

Vidhâtri;[1] thou art Indra,[2] Air, Fire, the Regent of the Waters;[3] the God of Wealth,[4] and Judge of the Dead;[5] and Thou, although but one,

[1] Aryaman and Dhâtri are two of the Twelve Âdityas, or Sons of Aditi, the "Mother," which were seven originally, Mârttânda, the "rejected" Sun being the eighth. Later they became the Twelve Sun Gods. Vidhâtri is the arranger or disposer, the Kosmokratôr or Demiurge, and is added as a title to Brahmâ, Vishvakarman and Kâma, the Erôs of the Orphic fragments. As Dr. Muir says: "This Kâma or Desire, not of sexual enjoyment, but of good in general, is celebrated in a curious hymn of the *Atharva Veda:* 'Kâma was born first [the Orphic Prôtogonos]. Him, neither gods, nor fathers, nor men have equalled. Thou art superior to these, and for ever great'."

[2] The "Zeus dwelling in the Æther" of Homer (*Ζεὺς αἰθέρι ναίων—Iliad*, ii. 412); in the Æther, the abode of the Gods. The Pater Æther of Virgil.

[3] Varuna (Ooaroona), the Regent of the Astral Waters of Space; the Uranus (Ouranos) of the Greeks, who was emasculated and dethroned by Cronus (Time) at the instigation of his mother and wife Gæa (Earth). From the drops of his blood sprang the Gigantes or Titans, the early Races, and from the foam that gathered round his limbs in the sea, sprang Venus-Aphrodite (Hesiod, *Theog.*, 180-195.)

[4] Kuvera, the keeper of the treasures of the Earth, lord of the Earth, called the Egg of Jewels, Ratnagarbha.

[5] Antaka the "Ender," a title of Yama, the "Restrainer," the Judge of the Dead. A Vedic Hymn tells us that Yama "was the first of men that died, and the first that departed to the (celestial) world." As Dowson says: "He it was who found out the way to the home which cannot be taken away: 'Those who are now born (follow) by their own paths to the place whither our ancient fathers have departed'." This, in the more direct tradition of the Vedas, is a glyph of the Third Race that brought

> ". . . . death into the world
> And all our woe, with loss of Eden."

presidest over the world, with various energies addressed to various purposes. Thou, identical with the solar ray, createst the universe; all elementary substance is composed of Thy qualities; and Thy supreme form is denoted by the imperishable term Sat. . . . To Him who is one with True Knowledge; who is, and is not, perceptible (sat and asat, 'real' and 'unreal'), I bow. Glory be to Him, the Lord Vâsudeva!"

The same strain of adoration is still further emphasized in the hymn of the Yogins when Vishnu, in the Boar Incarnation, or Varâha Avatâra, raised the Earth out of the Waters (*Ibid.*, i. 63):

"THOU ART, O God, there is no supreme condition but Thou."

Or again, as the God Brahmâ prays to the Supreme Hari (Vishnu) (*Ibid.*, i. 139):

"We glorify Him, Who is all things; the

But Yama, in the later traditions Pitripati and Pretarâja, the "Lord of the Manes" and "King of the Ghosts," was also Dharmarâja, "King of Justice," our *Selves* who judge ourselves, in the clear Akâshic Light, while Chitragupta (the "Hidden Painting or Writing"), the Scribe of Yama, reads the imprint of our virtues and our vices from the Agrasandhânî or "Great Record," the Tablets of the Imperishable Memory of the Astral Light. Yama is represented as of a green colour, clothed with red.

Lord supreme over all; unborn, imperishable; the protector of the mighty ones of creation, the unperceived,[1] indivisible Nârâyana; the smallest of the small, the largest of the largest Elements; in Whom are all things; from Whom are all things; Who was before existence; the God Who is all beings; Who is the end of ultimate objects; Who is beyond final Spirit, and is one with Supreme Soul; Who is contemplated, as the cause of final liberation, by sages anxious to be free."

As the Avatâra Krishna, He is hymned of by Indra after his defeat by Him. (*Ibid.*, v. 103.)

"Who is able to overcome the unborn, unconstituted Lord, Who has willed to become a mortal, for the good of the world?"

And when Krishna is *nailed* by the arrow to the *tree*, and the Kali Yuga begins, this is how Arjuna, his beloved companion, laments the departure of the Christ-Spirit, of That which "unites Entity to Non-entity." (*Ibid.*, v. 161, 162.)

"Hari, Who was our strength, our might,

[1] Aprakâsha: Fitzedward Hall tells us that the commentator explains this to mean "self-illuminated."

our heroism, our prowess, our prosperity, our brightness, has left us, and departed. Deprived of him, our friend, illustrious, and ever kindly speaking, we have become as feeble as if made of straw. Purushottama, who was the living vigour of my weapons, my arrows, and my bow, is gone. As long as we looked upon Him, fortune, fame, wealth, dignity never abandoned us. But Govinda is gone from among us. . . . Not I alone, but Earth, has grown old, miserable and lustreless, in His absence. Krishna . . . . . is gone!"

Let us next pass to China and the Far East. Lao-tze, perhaps the greatest of the Chinese masters, teaches as follows, in his sublime work the *Tao-teh-king*, or "The Book of the Perfection of Nature" (*A Study on the Popular Religion of the Chinese*, by J. J. M. de Groot: translated from the Dutch in *Les Annales du Musée Guimet*, ii. 692 *et seq.*):

"There was a time when Heaven and Earth did not exist, but only an unlimited Space in which reigned absolute immobility. All the visible things and all that which possess existence, were born in that Space from a powerful principle, which existed by Itself, and

from Itself developed Itself, and which made the heavens revolve and preserved the universal life; a principle as to which philosophy declares we know not the name, and which for that reason it designates by the simple appellation Tao, which we may nearly describe as the Universal Soul of Nature, the Universal Energy of Nature, or simply as Nature."

And in speaking of the mysterious Tao, the That which cannot be translated, the nameless principle, we may with advantage quote from an essay by a sympathetic scholar, who writes as follows (*Taoism*, an essay by Frederic H. Balfour, in *Religious Systems of the World*, p. 77):

"We are told that it has existed from all eternity. Chuang-tze, the ablest writer of the Taoist school, says that there never was a time when it was not. Lao-tze, the reputed founder of Taoism, affirms that the image of it existed before God Himself. It is all pervasive; there is no place where it is not found. It fills the Universe with its grandeur and sublimity; yet it is so subtle that it exists in all its plenitude in the tip of a thread of gossamer. It causes the sun and moon to revolve in their appointed orbits, and gives life to the most microscopic

insect. Formless, it is the source of every form we see; inaudible, it is the source of every sound we hear; invisible, it is that which lies behind every external object in the world; inactive, it yet produces, sustains and vivifies every phenomenon which exists in all the spheres of being. It is impartial, impersonal, and passionless; working out its ends with the remorselessness of Fate, yet abounding in beneficence to all."

And later on he quotes as follows from Chuang-tze:

"There was a time when all things had a beginning. The time when there was yet no beginning had a beginning itself. There was a beginning to the time when the time that had no beginning had not begun. There is existence and there is also non-existence. In the time which had no beginning there existed Nothing. . . . When the time which had no beginning had not yet begun, then there also existed Nothing. Suddenly, there was Nothing; but it cannot be known, respecting existence and non-existence, what was certainly existing and what was not."

I have given the above as a specimen of

subtle metaphysical speculation, and also as an example to show the utter inadequacy of words to express ideas. The mind loses itself in endeavouring to transcend itself, even to the extent of appearing entirely incomprehensible to those who have not seriously approached the contemplation of that supreme intuition of humanity, the essential Unity of all things.

But no one should think that this No-thing is an empty abstraction and mere negation; it transcends our finite concepts, but is no less the One Reality because of that. It is the right perception of these great problems that inspires such noble concepts of existence and calm contemplation of "death" as those expressed in the words of Lieh-tze:

"Death is to life as going away is to coming. How can we know that to die here is not to be born elsewhere? How can we tell whether, in their eager rush for life, men are not under a delusion? How can I tell whether, if I die to-day, my lot may not prove far preferable to what I was when I was originally born? . . . . Ah! men know the dreadfulness of death; but they do not know its rest. . . . How excellent is it, that from all antiquity Death has

been the common lot of men! It is repose for the good man, and a hiding-away of the bad. Death is just a going home again. The dead are those who have gone home, while we, who are living, are still wanderers." (*Op. cit.*, p. 81.)

Aye; death is indeed a "going home," but a "going home" that need not be delayed until the body dies. Some theosophists have heard of those who "go home" when they have "died" to their lower natures; and then they know the real nature of this illusory existence, although, as the Rishi Nârada reported, it was very pleasant for those "who had forgotten their birth-place." The Soul of Humanity, the World-Soul, weeps for her children, who forget their Mother and, "prodigal sons" that they are, fill their bellies with husks of the swine.

Continuing our depredations from the shelves of the world-library, we pass to ancient Persia or whatever country gave to the world the wisdom of the old Avesta. Written in a language hardly yet plainly decipherable, it may well be approached to the Vedas in antiquity, and its language be referred to one of the first branchlets of the mother of Sanskrit.

In the Avesta of the Pârsîs, Zarvâna Akarna,

"Time without Bounds," is the ineffable All; in this arises Ahura Mazda, the World-Soul, whose names are many. He is The Being and the One Existence; the One, Who was, Who is and Who shall always be. He is Pure Spirit and the Spirit of Spirits; Omniscient and Omnipotent, the Supreme Sovereign. He is beneficent, benevolent, and merciful to all. In the *Dinkard* (ii. 81), He is described as:

"Supreme sovereign, wise creator, supporter, protector, giver of good things, virtuous in actions and merciful."

Let us now see what the Kabalah has to teach us, and mark the difference of its great large spirit from the glorification of the "jealous God," the "God of armies," to whom so-called Christian nations pray to bless their respective arms in fratricidal wars. To-day sees Christian Europe armed to the teeth in honour of Jehovah, while the "Father" of Jesus, the "God of Love" is set on one side and forgotten.

Solomon ben Yehudah Ibn Gebirol, of Cordova, the greatest of the mediæval kabalistic adepts, thus sings of the World-Soul, or the Supreme Principle, in one of his philosophical

Hymns, called "The Kether Malkuth," or "Crown of the Kingdom."

"Thou art God, Who supports, by Thy Divinity, all the things formed, and sustains all the existences by Thy Unity. Thou art God, and there is not any distinction established between Thy Divinity, Thy Unity, Thy Eternity, and Thy Existence; because all is only one mystery, and, although the names may be distinct, all have only one meaning. Thou art Wise, Wisdom which is the fountain of life, floweth from Thee, and compared with Thy Wisdom, all the knowledge of mankind is foolishness. Thou art Wise, being from all eternity, and Wisdom was always nourished by Thee. Thou art Wise, and Thou hast not acquired Thy Wisdom from another than Thyself. Thou art Wise, and from Thy Wisdom Thou hast made a determining Will, as the workman or artist does, to draw the Existence from the No-Thing, as the light which goes out of the eye extends itself. Thou didst draw from the Source of Light without the impression of any seal, that is, form, and Thou madest all without any instrument." (Myer's *Qabbalah*, p. 3.)

See how differently the mind of this learned

Jew regarded the "creation" of the Universe from the absurdity of the dead-letter dogma of "creation out of nothing." Just as the artist fashions the pot out of the clay, so does the Deity, out of its Wisdom which is Itself, emanate or evolve a determining Will to draw the "Existence" from the "No-Thing," the potentiality of that same Wisdom, for it is No-Thing in that it transcends all and every *thing* we can think of, that is to say, the highest conceptions of human thought. But It is no more "Nothing" than is Deity the "Unconscious." The No-Thing is not "nothing," the Non-conscious is not "unconscious," but both are attributes expressive of our ignorance, while asserting that That transcends all things and all consciousness.

So that we should do well to bear in mind the wise words of the *Zohar* and apply the injunction contained therein to the words of the Hymn of the master of the Kabalah we have just cited, being well assured that he would have permitted none of his pupils to take the words of his instruction for the real mystery itself. Says the *Zohar* (III. fol. 152*b*; in Myer's *Qabbalah*, p. 102):

"Woe to the man who sees in the Thorah (Law) only simple recitals and ordinary words. . . . Each word of the Thorah contains an elevated meaning and a sublime mystery. The recitals of the Thorah are the vestments of the Thorah. Woe to him who takes this garment for the Thorah itself."

Or, again, as Origen, perhaps the most philosophical of all the Church Fathers, writes:

"Where can we find a mind so foolish as to suppose that God acted like a common husbandman, and planted a paradise in (the Garden of) Eden, towards the East; and placed in it a Tree of Life visible and palpable, so that one tasting of the fruit by the bodily teeth obtained life? And, again, that one was a partaker of good and evil by masticating what was taken from the tree? And if God is said to walk in the paradise in the evening, and Adam to hide himself under a tree, I do not suppose that anyone doubts that these things figuratively indicate certain mysteries, the history having taken place in appearance, and not literally." (Origen's Works, Clark's Ed., cited, 315 *et seq.*, Bk. iv. c. 2.)

But then Origen was once the disciple of